unlikely but for the assistance of persons of Jewish origin.[1]

§iv

The Jewish scientific activity of the later Middle Ages culminated in the work of Abraham Zacuto, one of the most remarkable savants of the fifteenth century, whose work was of the utmost importance in the period of the great maritime discoveries. The most capable astronomer, perhaps, of his day, he had taught that subject (informally, as appears from the latest researches on the subject) at the University of Salamanca, where he met, and was consulted by, Columbus. On the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, he made his way to Portugal, where he received appointment almost immediately as Astronomer-Royal; and, when persecutions followed in that country in 1497, he managed to escape to North Africa, where he compiled the well-known chronicle, *Sepher Juhasin,* which made his name memorable in the annals of Jewish literature.

While at Salamanca, he compiled a series of astronomical tables, based on the work of his predecessors but considerably improved, which immediately obtained general recognition. His pupil, Joseph Vecinho (pp. 79-80), translated them into Latin and Spanish, and had them published at the press of the Jewish printer, Abraham d'Orta, at Leiria, in 1496. So highly esteemed was this work that, before the century was out, it was twice

[1] It is an ironic consideration that, notwithstanding the assistance

which the Marranos had given in the discovery of the New World, they were not safe from persecution even here. As early as 1515, the Inquisition started its operations, bringing persons suspected of Judaising back to Europe for trial; and before the end of the century *autos de j&* were familiar spectacles in every part of the Spanish dominions overseas. Among the earliest victims of the Inquisition in the New World was Hernando Alonso, who had followed Cortes to Mexico, as one of the *conquistadores ;* he was burned at the stake, with another Judaiser, in 1528.